

Games to play in a socially-distanced setting with your youth group

Many of the games below you may have been playing on zoom, they will work equally well socially-distanced in a face to face context. If you are using paper and pens, or other equipment, for the games make sure that each person has the paper and pens on their chair when they arrive and they will need to use the same equipment all evening. If it is a seated game make sure that chairs are appropriately spaced, or appropriate marking on the floor where they need to sit.

Active/running around games

Scavenger Hunt

This game would work best outside, such as in a park. The leader shouts out an object to be found (eg an acorn, 5 different types of leaves, something beginning with R, gather enough twigs and use them to spell out the word Jesus - or other appropriate word! etc) The young people race to find such an object. They are not allowed to work together, they must be separate, and must stay at a distance from the other players. Each player has a separate base to return to when they have found the object. The first player to return to their base with the object wins. An alternative way to make sure that the players remain at a distance is to give each player a different area of the park in which they can look, they will therefore not be able to be in contact with other players.

Newspaper scrunch

Each player has their own 'base' at a safe distance from others. Each player has a bucket (or something similar) at an appropriate distance in front of them. Each player has a newspaper. A time limit is given and the aim of the game is to scrunch up pieces of newspaper into a ball and then throw it into their bucket. When the time limit has been reached the players retrieve their bucket and count how many paper balls they got into it. Those with the most win. For safety, at the end each player can throw their newspaper balls in the bin, so no one else touches them, they can then stack their buckets one at a time, so they are not touched by anyone else.

I see you

This game is best played outside, such as in a park, where there are many things to hide behind! One person is chosen to be the 'searcher', everyone else goes and hides separately. There is a central base to which all players need to return, such as a specific tree or bench, it is best if the base isn't an isolated object. The aim of the game is to reach the base without being seen by the searcher, by hiding behind objects and moving stealthily towards the base! If a player is spotted by the searcher – the searcher has to say 'I see you' including the player's name and point at them. This normally provides the other players with an opportunity to win while the searcher is distracted!

Hunt!

This needs some space to play, so could be done outside, or inside a large building with a number of rooms. The leader hides an object and tells the players what it is. The players then run around the park trying to find the object. They must stay at a safe distance from the other players or they will be out! For safety, when the object has been found, if it is disposable then it can be thrown away or

washed instead. If you are playing inside a building and want to avoid places in the building being touched by many different hands, then you could either play it saying that young people are not allowed to touch anything, or instead put letters in places around the building where things don't need to be moved and when they have found all the letters they need to work out what word those letters spell. First to discover the word wins!

Opposites

The leader says one of 6 instructions, however the young people have to do the opposite of what is said. For example

- Left (lean to the right)
- Right (lean to the left)
- Up (squat down)
- Down (stand up)
- Turn (do nothing)
- Still (jump up and down)

The faster you say them the more fun it will be. If a player does it wrong, then they lose a life (you can decide on how many lives you allow them to have). Maybe the young people will come up with some of their own instructions so the game can develop in other ways!

Sitting down games

Count the seconds

Everyone closes their eyes (except for the leader). The leader says an amount of time (e.g. 40 secs, 52 secs) the young people have to put up their thumbs when they think that amount of time has elapsed. The person whose thumb went up the closest to the time wins a point. Play a couple of rounds.

Not the same

The leader says a category, e.g. colour, countries, types of weather, things you find in a church, books of the Bible etc. One person is chosen (player 1), they think of something within that category and write it down. Then go around the group and each person can make a guess, trying to guess what player 1 has written down. If they guess it correctly then they get a point, player 1 gets a point every time someone guesses incorrectly.

A slightly different version of the above. The leader gives the group 3 categories, and then announces a letter of the alphabet. Give the group a specific amount of time, for example 2 minutes. In that time, they need to write down 3 answers under each category that all begin with the letter that was announced. The aim of the game is get answers that no one else writes down. When the time has elapsed, go around the group asking them to read out their answers a category at a time. If somebody else has also written down their answer then everyone who has that answer has to cross it off their list. By the end only unique answers will remain on people's lists. Everyone gets a point for each unique answer.

Who am I?

Choose a person from the group (player 1) and the leader asks them to leave the room for a minute. During that time, the rest of the group decide on a name of a famous person for player 1 to be. Player 1 is then brought back into the room. Player 1 asks questions to find out which famous person they are. The rest of the group can only answer with 'yes' or 'no'. The aim is to discover who you are with the least number of questions.

Leader of the Band

One person (player 1) is chosen to go out of the room for a minute. While player 1 is absent the rest of the group decide who the 'leader of the band' will be. The leader of the band leads the rest of the group by pretending to play a musical instrument, everyone else in the group has to copy the instrument that the band leader is playing. The band leader needs to regularly change the instrument, and the others in the group need to follow. No one speaks, and people need to try and be subtle about the changes. Player 1 needs to watch everyone and try and work out who the band leader is.

Bingo

Get each player to draw their own grid of 16 squares (you could have more or less squares depending on your group). They each write numbers into the squares on their grid. The leader tells everyone what the range of numbers are (for example only numbers between 1-30, or 1-100 etc). The leader then says numbers at random, and if they appear on the player's grid then they cross them off. They win Bingo when they get a line of crosses!

Real or unreal?

Find a catalogue, brochure or magazine – for example an Ikea catalogue, a leaflet of paint colours, a hymnbook! Read out a name (or pretend to read out a name) of something (e.g. an Ikea name for a piece of furniture, or a Dulux paint colour or a line of a hymn) and the players need to decide whether it is real or not real. E.g. "when troubles come and my heart is burdened be, then I am still and wait here in the silence" – hymn or pop song? Radicchio – a paint colour or not?

Pictionary

Each player has a pen each so that they are not sharing pens. Set up a flip chart stand with paper, or blu tack some paper to the wall so everyone can see from a distance. Have a number of bits of paper on which are written names of objects/activities/places etc which can easily be thrown away after the go. In turns a player pick up the paper, reads the words and then proceeds to draw the item for the other players to guess. You could split people into teams to make it more competitive. Make sure, even though in teams, they maintain their distance.

Play Your Cards Right

If you are old enough you may remember this classic game from the TV! Line up 5 playing cards in a row with the backs showing, the faces hidden. A player is chosen to start and the leader turns over the first card. The player can decide whether the second card will be higher or lower than the first (the rest of the group can say their thoughts on this too, to keep everyone engaged). If they guess correctly then they go to the third card and guess whether it will be higher or lower than the second, and so on. If they guess incorrectly then their go is over and they receive no points. They can choose to 'stick' at any point and collect the points they have gathered - points are awarded for how many cards are turned over e.g. 5 points for 5 cards, 4 points for 4 cards etc.

Tell Me

A category is agreed upon, such as boy's names, famous people, food and drink etc. The leader announces a letter. Everyone takes it in turn to say something in that category beginning with the letter announced (no repetitions allowed). To make it faster and more frantic, set a time limit of 3 seconds, if a player can't think of an answer in the time then they are out, keep going until there is a winner.

Charades

The players can take it in turns to act out titles of movies, TV shows, books and everyone else has to try and guess what it is.

Would I lie to you?

You could play this like the TV show – the first player describes briefly something they have done/a story about themselves. Everyone else then asks them questions to find out more details. Then collectively they decide whether they are telling the truth or not.

Alternatively, everyone could say three things – two of them truths, one of them a lie. Everyone has to decide what the fake statements are.

Quizzes

There are many ways to have a socially distanced quiz. Having teams will still work but make sure that they sit at a distance, this may make conferring difficult, but they can answer questions without conferring but still collect points for their team.